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BCStats

Infoline

Contact: bcstats.infoline@gov.bc.ca Issue: 09-11 March 20, 2009

- **Consumer prices rise 1.5% in February**
- **Manufacturing sales drop 3.0% in January**
- **Retail sales jump 3.1% in January**

Prices

- **Compared to the same month a year earlier, consumer prices in British Columbia were up an average of 1.5% in February.** Reduced energy (-7.0%) prices continue to skew the overall Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the province. Excluding energy, the CPI would have risen 2.2%.

  Despite significant downward pressure from the falling cost of energy, consumer prices still rose. This was primarily due to a sharp (+7.0%) rise in the cost of food. While restaurant bills were up by a modest amount (+3.4%), grocery store checkout counters is where households felt the pinch as prices increased at a rate (+8.9%) not seen in nearly two decades. While most food products showed moderate-to-high price increases, the cost of fruits (+11.1%) and vegetables (+16.7%) as well as baked goods & cereals (+11.1%) continued to soar.

  With increases in utility and owed accommodation costs slowing, shelter-related price hikes also continued to decelerate, rising just 1.3% in February, down from a recent peak of 4.1% reached in July 2008. Beyond shelter, the costs of furnishing & operating a home (+2.1%) as well as clothing & footwear (+0.5%) were up compared to last year. Heavily influenced by declining gasoline prices (-13.8%), transportation costs slid lower for the fourth consecutive period (-3.8%).

  It cost 3.4% more for goods and services related to health & personal care, while prices for recreation, education & reading materials increased only slightly (+0.9%). Alcohol & tobacco products saw moderate price increases in February (+1.9%).

  Both Vancouver (+1.6%) and Victoria (+1.5%) posted inflation rates either at or just above the provincial average.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **Year-over-year, Canadian consumer prices were up 1.4% in February with rising food (+7.4%) and shelter (+3.0%) costs providing most of the upward pressure.** Provincially, the fastest price increases were posted in the Prairies. Consumers in Saskatchewan paid 2.6% more for goods and services while those in Alberta (+2.1%) and Manitoba (+1.7%) also saw price increases above the national average.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

The Economy

- **Manufacturing sales in the province fell for the fourth straight month, dropping 3.0% (*seasonally adjusted*) in January.** The chief reason for the downturn was a 14.8% drop in the value of paper products shipped, accounting for most of the decline. Sales of printing & related goods were also down sharply (-10.4%). As a result, and despite increased activity among beverage & tobacco (+4.2%) and food producers (+1.3%), shipments of non-durables were off 3.5%.

  Following back-to-back months of double-digit declines, sales of wood products dipped only slightly (-0.7%). While sales of computer & electronic equipment (+7.0%) were stronger in January, shipments of fabricated metals (-13.1%), transportation equipment

Report

British Columbia's Provincial Electoral Districts Revealed

Did you know...
Just 15% of British Columbians reported having Irish roots.
But, as the saying goes, everyone is Irish on Saint Patrick's Day!

Data Source: Statistics Canada

(-12.0%) and machinery & equipment (-6.1%) were down significantly compared to the previous month. Total shipments of durables were down 2.4%.

Nationally, manufacturing sales dropped 5.4% in January, reaching the lowest level in nearly a decade as motor vehicle sales and automotive parts, particularly in Ontario, registered record declines during the month. Six provinces reported weaker shipments with Ontario (-11.3%) registering its largest ever month-over-month decrease. Excluding Ontario, total national sales would have only dipped 0.3%. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Consumers opened their wallets wider as retail activity in the province jumped 3.1% (*seasonally adjusted*) in January.** Nearly all types of retailers contributed to the increase, with much of the growth coming from stronger sales among automotive (+5.0%) and food (+4.0%) sellers. New car dealers (+8.8%) enjoyed a return to positive growth after declining in each of the three previous months.

  Canada-wide, retail sales rose 1.9% in January, led by a hefty increase (+6.4%) among new car dealerships and the automotive sector in general (+3.8%). Sales were up in nine provinces, with British Columbia (+3.1%) and Ontario (+3.0%) registering the largest gains. Manitoba was the only province to post a decline (-0.6%).*Data Source: Statistics Canada & BC Stats*

- **The number of new motor vehicles sold in British Columbia surged ahead 10.9% (*seasonally adjusted*) in January.** Sales of both new trucks (+10.7%) and passenger cars (+11.9%) increased at double-digit rates. Neither of these increases, however, were enough to offset the decrease in sales (-14.8%) registered during the previous month. Nationally, the number of new motor vehicles sold was up 5.5%.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada & BC Stats

- **Wholesale sales in British Columbia inched ahead 0.4% (*seasonally adjusted*) to $4.2 billion in January.** On a national level, wholesale activity was down sharply (-4.2%) almost entirely due to a substantial drop within Ontario (-9.7%) as Alberta (-0.6%), Nova Scotia (-0.6%) and PEI (-0.2%) posted only minor declines. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

Health

- **Due to improved detection methods and increased survival rates, the number of Canadians living with cancer, and therefore the prevalence of cancer in the Canadian population, is on the rise.** As of January 2005, approximately 695,000 people had been diagnosed with cancer at some point in the previous 10 years, representing 2.2% of the Canadian population. Roughly one-fifth (21%) of all cases were breast cancer while another fifth (19%) were prostate cancer, indicating not only a high number of diagnoses, but also increased survival rates for those with these diseases.

  Among men, prostate cancer accounted for the largest share of males diagnosed (38.2%) within the past decade with the next most common being colorectal (14%), bladder (8%) and lung (5%) cancers. Correspondingly, breast cancer (40%) was the most widespread among women with colorectal (12%), uterine (7%) and lung (5%) cancers also common diagnoses.

  The prevalence of cancer between men and women appears to shift with age. Before age 60, women were more likely than men to be living with a diagnosis of cancer. However, after age 60, the percentage of men with cancer surpassed women, mostly a result of a surge in prostate cancer. The prevalence of most cancers increases with age. Exceptions to this were testicular cancer among men, cervical and thyroid cancer in women and Hodgkin lymphoma and brain cancer in both sexes, illustrating that these cancers are caught sooner when treatment is possible.

  Data Source: SC - Cat. no. 82-003-XWE

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March 20, 2009

Contact: Paul Gosh
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originally published in
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British Columbia's Provincial Electoral Districts Revealed

The same but different

Canada is one of the most diverse countries in the world. First Nations heritage, European settlement, and westward expansion fed by immigration created the country and urban centres that now draw a more exotic mix of migrants. At five-year intervals a census is taken that gives us a socio-economic snapshot of the evolving country. When we move from the composite national profile to provincial profiles, we encounter variations that differentiate the provinces from the national averages. Likewise, any division of the province into parts will show a wider range of variability among them. With this in mind, we will look at a number of socio-economic characteristics in the provincial ridings based on the results of the 2006 Census. In the interest of brevity it serves our purpose here to look only at the ridings at the extremes of variability. More detailed tabulations featuring the full set of ridings, appear on our web site.

Issues will resonate to varying degrees in each riding depending on local circumstances, sensibilities and experiences. Sometimes what sets these apart can be gauged by socio-economic stratification, and that is the basis of the presentation that follows. The spectrum of sensitivity to issues can make for unexpected alliances of otherwise remarkably different regions. This analysis will bring several ridings into focus on any given characteristic.

Take a read on the riding

If, instead, you want to know more about any individual riding, you will find a 27-page profile of each of the 85 ridings on our web site at:

www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/cen06/profiles/peds/ped_06.asp

What's old is new

This article is a remake of "Provincial Electoral Districts: All politics is local" published in April of 2005. Differences worth noting are:

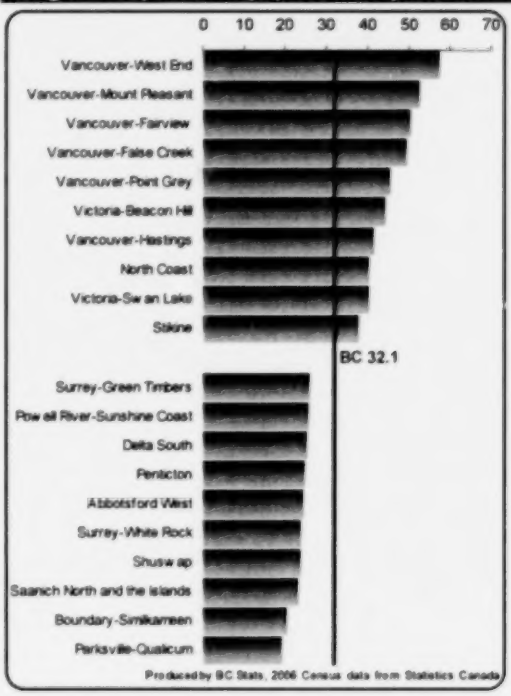
- The ridings examined here are those that come into force for the general election scheduled for May 12, 2009.
- Data was purchased for the specified geographic boundaries in order to minimise the effects of suppression and random rounding employed by Statistics Canada to ensure individual confidentiality.
- As before, the data for each topic are ranked. Of the 85 ridings, only the 'top ten' and 'bottom ten' are shown along with a line that represents the provincial average. However, this time the data are displayed in charts rather than tables.
- The charts, while more immediately revealing, do not convey as much information as a tabular presentation. The tables and charts (including additional ones) and ranked data for all 85 ridings, are available for download from our site.

Fish in the sea

The census definition for Single stipulates the distinction 'never married'. Crowding out the top of the list are a number of highly urban Vancouver ridings. This is likely a reflection of the big city as a magnet for those who are striking out in the world and have not gotten around to getting formally hooked-up. But a few of the ridings in this group are the direct opposite. The remote northern ridings suggest the reduced prospects of the work camp while the Victoria ridings must be something different again. Perhaps the capital does have some draw for the ones starting out.

Our bottom 10 are a mixed bag. The Vancouver suburbs are the logical step for young families as they provide the housing and schools that become important at this stage in the life cycle.

Singles as a percent of population 15 years and older

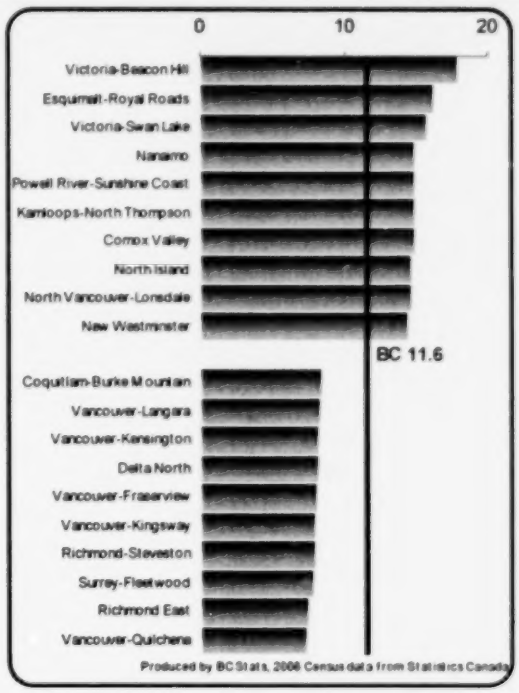


Not what I was looking for

It is remarkable how different the list of Divorced or Separated is to the one above. Six of the top ten are Island ridings. Because this is a snapshot at a point in time (May 11, 2006) we don't know if they are coming to the Island to reinvent their lives or if 'something in the water' in these areas causes relationships to crumble. This is ripe for further research to understand the dynamics at play. What is clear is that related issues will resonate strongly in these areas.

Even more remarkable is the geographic concentration at the bottom of the list. Every single riding is in the Greater Vancouver area. There are probably two main contributors to this situation. Note that, for the most part, the downtown core is absent. The couple-friendly ridings listed draw their strength from ethnicity and culture that favour family ties. Even where this may be less true, these ridings have a housing stock that is sought by families.

Divorced or separated as a percent of population 15+



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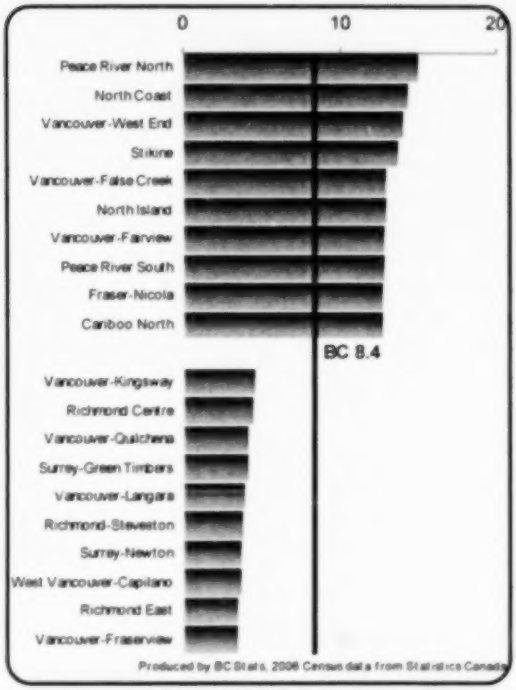
Setting up house together

Our list toppers are eclectic, the bottom much less so. At the top we find some of our more remote regions standing shoulder to shoulder with the most urban and urbane. This mainstream life choice is not distinguished by urban versus rural values.

Or is it? The ridings populating the bottom of the list—at rates very different from the top—are all to be found in the lower mainland. In general these are ridings with large immigrant populations where more traditional family values hold sway.

Living common-law as a percent of population 15+

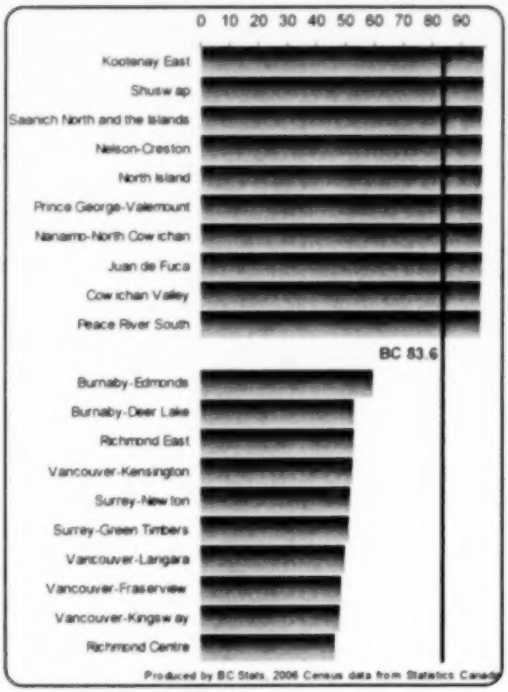


Speaking in tongues

There is a very different look to this chart. The list toppers have the appearance of uniformity, and that is as a result of all being constrained by the 100% boundary of possibility. If you want to reach everyone in these ridings, you simply have to speak to their issues and do it in English. Enough said.

Get out the travel dictionary. But you don't have to travel far. Every riding at the lower end of the list is in and about Greater Vancouver. Our riding profiles will tell you what languages tend to be spoken here and there will be differences as we skip from one to the next. These are the gathering places for the newest immigrants to British Columbia.

English home language as % of single home language



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Your move

We are a province of movers. From one census to the next almost half of British Columbians have moved. Only 53.4% had not moved in that time. And this only counts the ones five years and older living in British Columbia on the last census day. Many others will have dispersed to other provinces and countries. But some ridings move at a more sedate pace. For the most part these are remote regions where the people seem to put down deeper roots. Interestingly, the north shore of Greater Vancouver has a similar attraction.

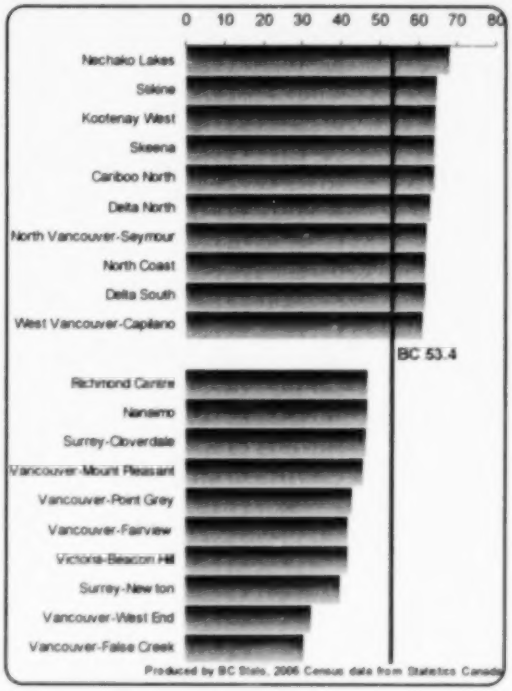
At the bottom of our list we find the two Vancouver ridings that are home to some of the most frenetic condo construction in the province. It only makes sense that we find them here. There has been a similar condo building boom in downtown Victoria which places Victoria-Beacon Hill amongst the most active movers. As expected, Vancouver ridings make up the balance with the inclusion of Nanaimo, which is a growth hot spot on the Island.

Cross-country trip

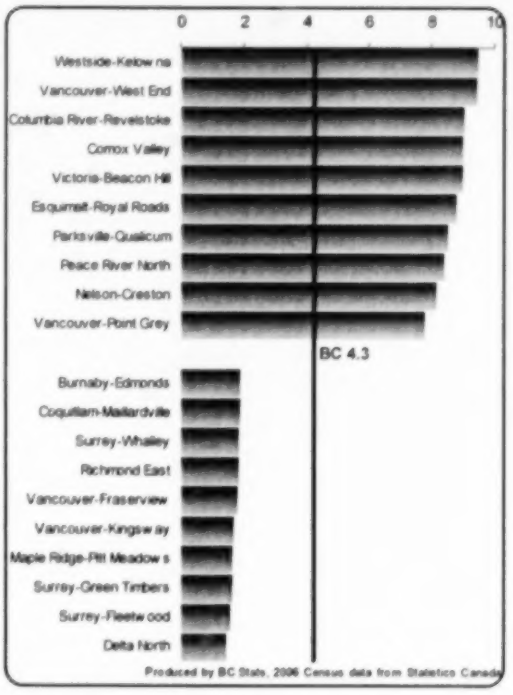
The converse of the non-movers above is the movers, who are concentrated at the bottom of that list. Now we are looking at a selection of those movers above and the percentages are much lower - but the relative differences between the ridings are greater. Look at the uppermost ridings coming in at double the provincial rate. We don't have the age dimension to make the call but it appears these may be ridings that attract retirees from elsewhere in country.

Our bottom of the list ridings, at rates oppositely different from the provincial average, are the Vancouver ridings that attract a different segment of the itinerant population. Perhaps the price of housing has something to do with this placement as Vancouver prices have soared so much that it is a deal breaker when contemplating a move with equity gained elsewhere in Canada.

Didn't move in past 5 years as % of population 5+



From another province in past 5 years as % pop. 5+

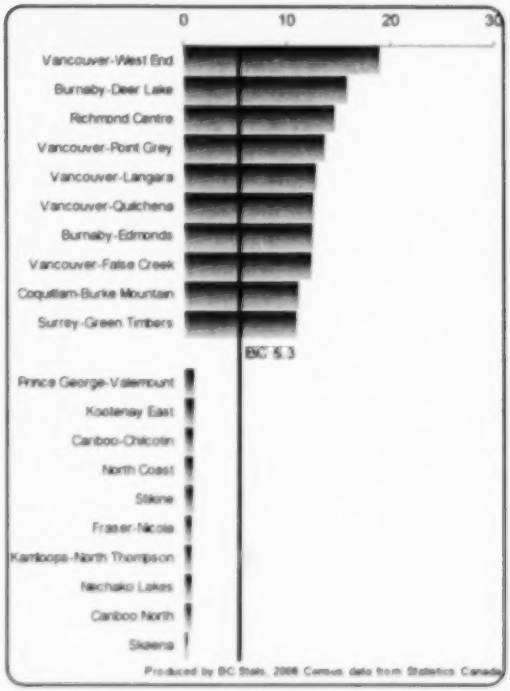


Welcome to Canada

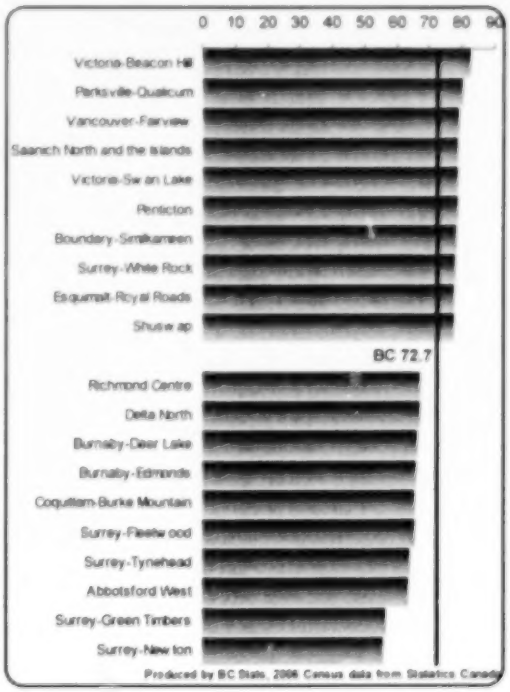
We've seen some remarkable differences between ridings up to this point. But nothing like this. Look at the relative differences between the top and bottom of the chart to the right. They are night and day. Newcomers from offshore overwhelmingly choose to settle first in the lower mainland. Each of these ridings will have attracted a singular mix of immigrants. To delve into this deeper browse through the individual riding profiles on our site.

The congregation of immigrants in some ridings means that they will be relatively absent from others. Every one of the ridings at the bottom of the list is bypassed by immigrants as they choose to settle in the urban core of British Columbia. And not one of these ridings is a list topper for migrants from elsewhere in Canada. (previous chart)

From outside Canada in past 5 years as % of pop. 5+



Canadian citizens 18+ as percent of total population



Mark your ballot with an X

There is not a lot of variation here but we are still interested because this is at the centre of our story. This demographic is a very close proxy for voters and we can see that some ridings, relative to population, are more voter rich than others. Vancouver area ridings win only a couple of spots on the top of our list—but all of them at the bottom.

What does this mean? If you are canvassing for votes in ridings near the bottom of the list, be sure to check for eligibility.

Here by choice

We have already seen that those coming from outside Canada in the past five years chose to settle in the lower mainland. Now we are looking at those who are/were immigrants to Canada at any time in their lives. An absolute majority of the population in our list-top ridings are immigrants. Some, perhaps most as we go down the list, will be long settled. Issues that galvanize immigrants will ring loudly and clearly in ridings at the top of our list.

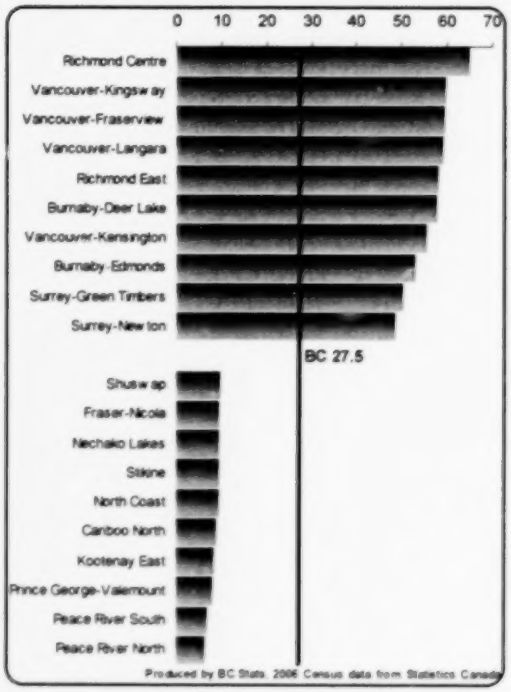
Ridings at the bottom of the list have an immigrant community that is a small fraction of the provincial average and widely different from the immigrant-rich ridings of the lower mainland. Most immigrants in these far-flung ridings will be well settled and they do not 'set the tone' for the riding since their relative numbers are so small.

A fresh start

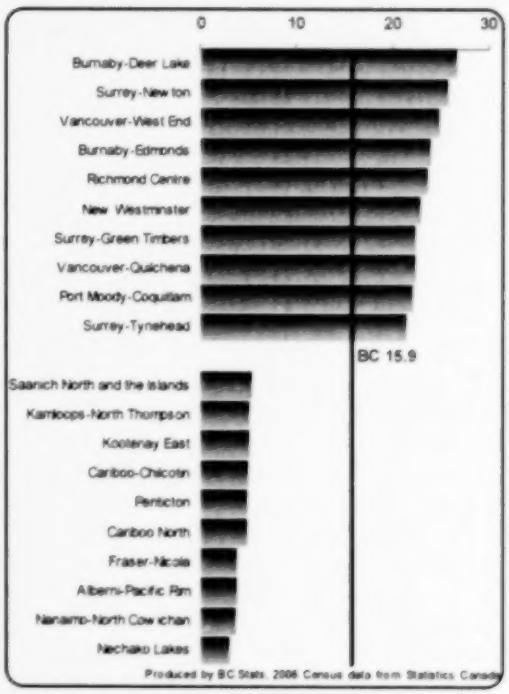
This chart looks at how fresh the faces are amongst the immigrant population. On average, almost 16 percent of immigrants have come in the 5 years prior to the Census. Ten Vancouver area ridings stand at the top of this ranking. Not only are their immigrant populations large, they are growing the fastest. Issues around the absorption of newcomers into the population will be front and centre here.

With all these charts you make it to the bottom of the list by coming up relatively small. You can do that in one of two ways—decrease the numerator (in this case new immigrants) or increase the denominator (in this case immigrants). So the bottom dwellers may have had very, very few new immigrants or they had few new immigrants but have a relatively larger number of persons who immigrated at some point. Often, we find that these earlier immigrants came from a country that is no longer a large contributor of immigrants.

Immigrated at any time as percent of total population



Immigrated after 2000 as percent of immigrants



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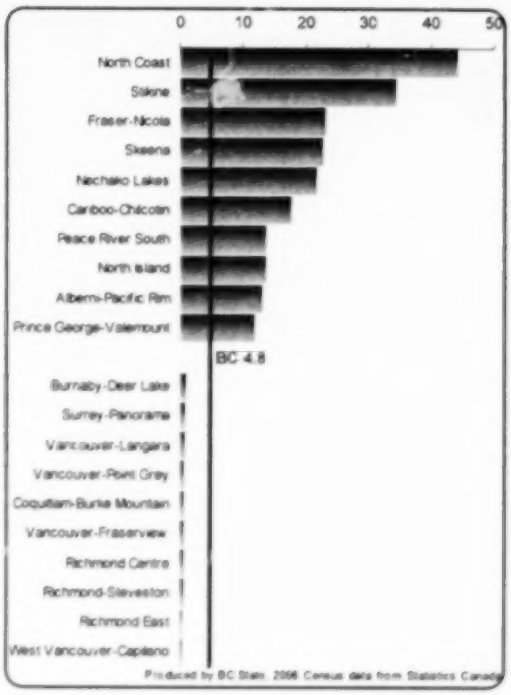
First come, first served?

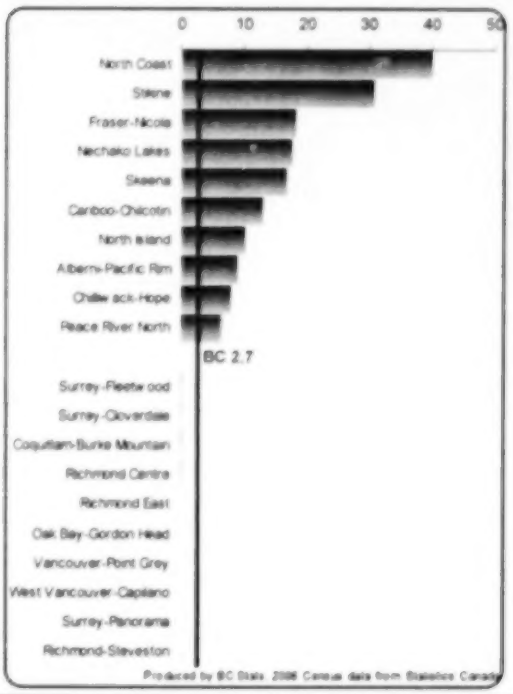
The next two chart focus on the Aboriginal community. The first chart demonstrates the most striking range of gradation—until we get to the next chart. Aboriginal issues are agenda items at every level of government. In British Columbia 4.8% of the population have identified as Aboriginal. In North Coast, almost ten times that ratio have so identified. Not one of our list toppers is in the lower mainland.

On the other hand, every single riding at the bottom of the list is to be found in the lower mainland.

Identified as Aboriginal as percent of total population



Registered Indian as percent of total population



Status symbol

Registered Indian (status) is a subset of Aboriginal identity. It is not available to Inuit or Métis (although some few may be included). This federally administered program is for North American Indians who meet certain criteria. The provincial representation is now down to 2.7%, but the list toppers have been affected to a much lesser degree.

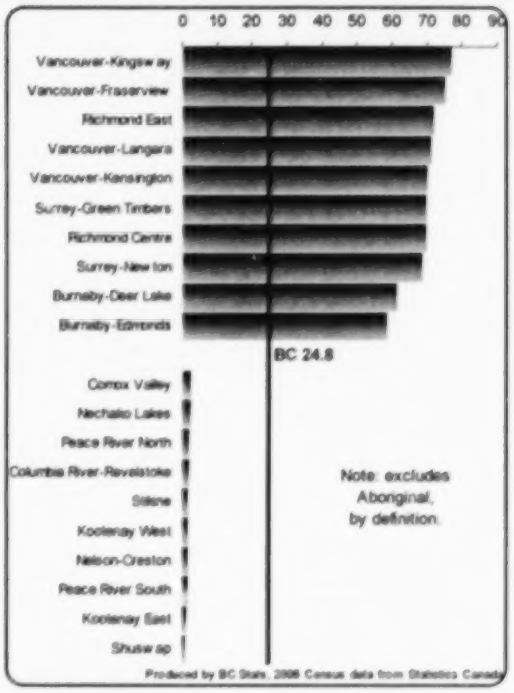
Strikingly, for the bottom of the list ridings the demographic is effectively absent. Here, Aboriginal issues are the stuff of conceptual social justice.

Standing out

Our chart on visible minorities displays roughly the same relative range as the one on Aboriginals. But it is decidedly different in that all top ten ridings demonstrate concentrations at more than double the provincial average. And they are all lower mainland ridings. This uniformity and geographic concentration give them a loud and coherent voice when they wish to be heard.

No real surprises at the bottom of the list. Not one in the lower mainland and most are far removed. If you want an exotic meal in one of these ridings, get a cookbook and there's a good chance you will have to mail order your ingredients.

Visible minority as percent of total population



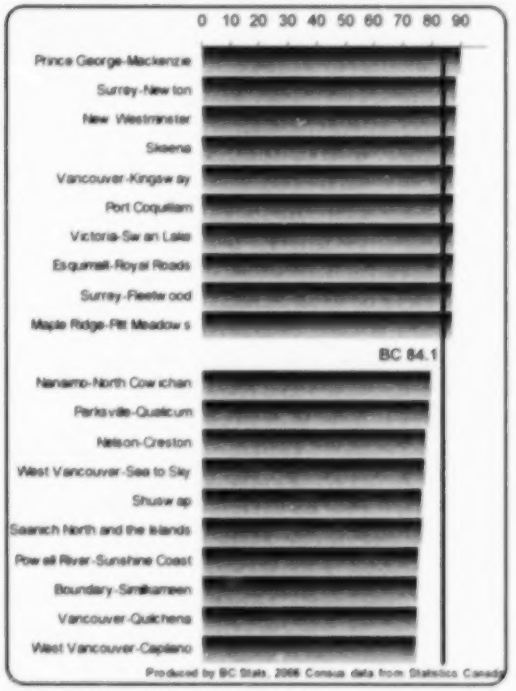
Working all together now

Because there is so little variation in this chart (compare it to the one above), it suggests that there is not much of a handle on this characteristic. In short, it appears that everybody works. Nothing to see here folks, please move along.

But not so fast. There must something . . .

First, it appears that work issues aren't wedge issues. But they will be resoundingly important, so it is important not to neglect them. Also note that this reflects conditions that existed in 2006.

Employees 15+ as % of labour force 15 and older

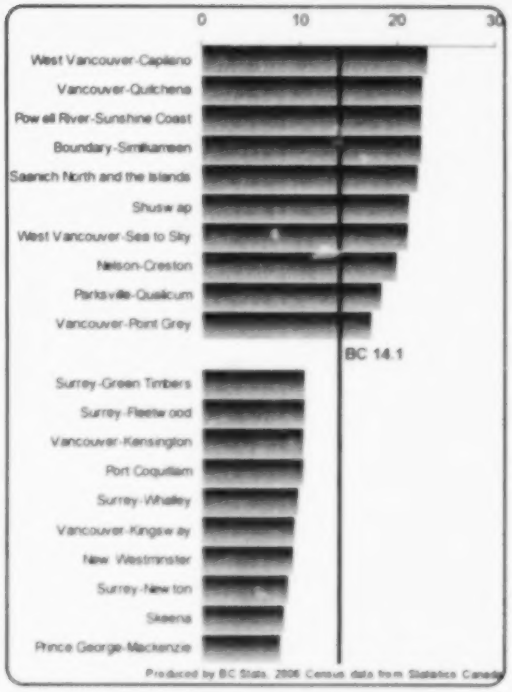


Says who?

Essentially this is the flip side of the above, but sometimes it pays to twist the numbers this way and that until they reveal an insight.

The top ten districts have respectable numbers in the 'self-employed constituency' and the ratios are two to three times what shows up at the bottom of the list. Seems like an opening. Some constituencies will be more or less open to messaging around the self-employed.

Self-employed 15+ as % of labour force 15 and older



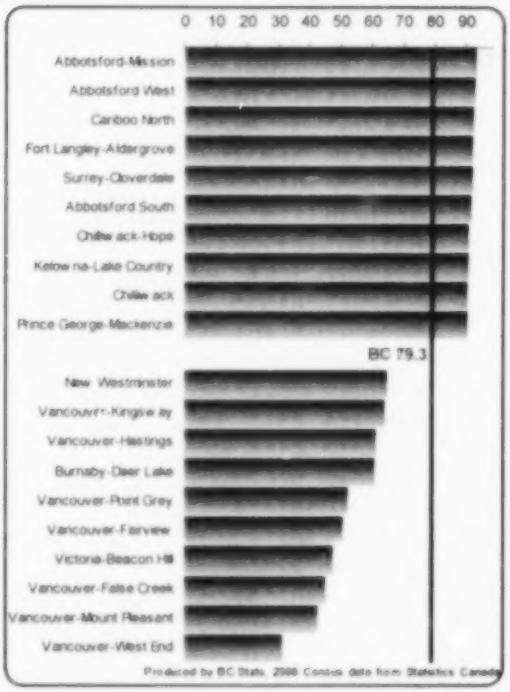
Vroom, vroom

For most people and for most places in the province, taking the bus is just not an option. They get to work in a vehicle as the driver or as a passenger. That's why our top ten are pressing up close to the max. Public transit issues may be hot buttons here as voters will be hard pressed to be convinced of the benefits.

Looking at the bottom group of ridings we see they are, with one exception, likely to be very sensitive to transportation issues in the most highly urbanized areas of Vancouver.

The differences from the provincial average, top to near bottom, are not that great compared with other distributions we've visited. However, talk about the price of fuel and you've got just about everybody's attention.

Driver or passenger in car, truck or van - % of total

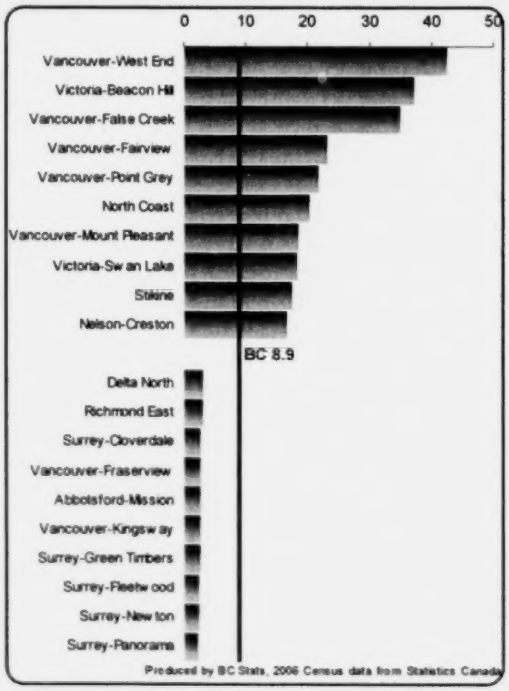


Zero emissions vehicle

Our list-topping group is more eclectic than anything we've seen so far: the West End of Vancouver grouped with Victoria's Beacon Hill, the North Coast and Stikine – with Nelson tossed in for good measure. Who would have thought that they all exercised common lifestyle choices?

Every riding (no pun intended) at the bottom of our list is suburban. This is the challenge of how we have built our cities in North America. The differences, top to bottom, have more to do with options than attitudes.

Walk or bicycle to work as percent of total



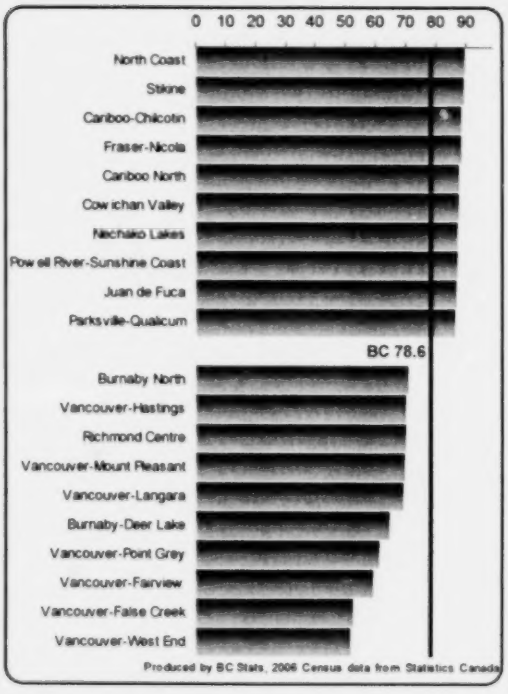
Getting beyond that first credential – take 1

Our next three charts look at the same phenomenon – we'll call it under education –as demonstrated in three age groups: the young and starting out; the established; and seniors.

There's not a lot of variation in our first cut that looks at 15 to 24 year olds. But the variation that does exist respects the (very) urban-rural divide. The city kids pull away early. There is more than a little unfairness in this assessment as the Vancouver ridings that edge to the extreme (lower is better) end of the list will be home to post-secondary students and recent graduates, many of whom will have been drawn from other ridings.

Similarly, the list-top ridings will have given up some of their sons and daughters to the advanced education and training facilities found only in other ridings.

15 to 24 with high school or less, % of population 15-24



Getting beyond that first credential – take 2

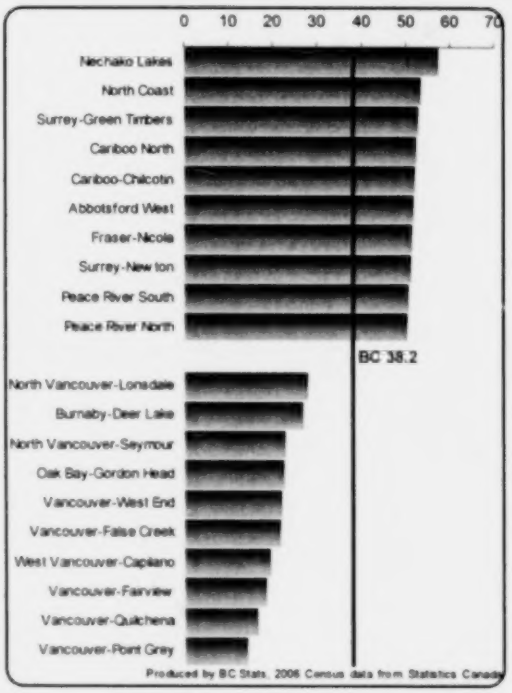
For this cut we are looking at the adult population – those from 25 to 64. And we see some interesting movement in the ranks at the extremes of our chart. We also see that the amount of variation from the average has increased.

The BC average has fallen from 78.6% to 38.2%. Every single riding demonstrates graduation levels beyond the average for the 15 to 24 year olds.

Our list-toppers are now a different mix of rural and suburban ridings where the lack of post-secondary training is not a show-stopper in the local industrial/occupational mix.

Likewise, the ridings identified at the more educated bottom end of our list could fairly be described as the more gentrified neighbourhoods with a higher proportion of generally higher earning knowledge workers. These ridings are likely to place high value on the enhancement of educational options for their own children.

25 to 64 with high school or less, % of population 25-64

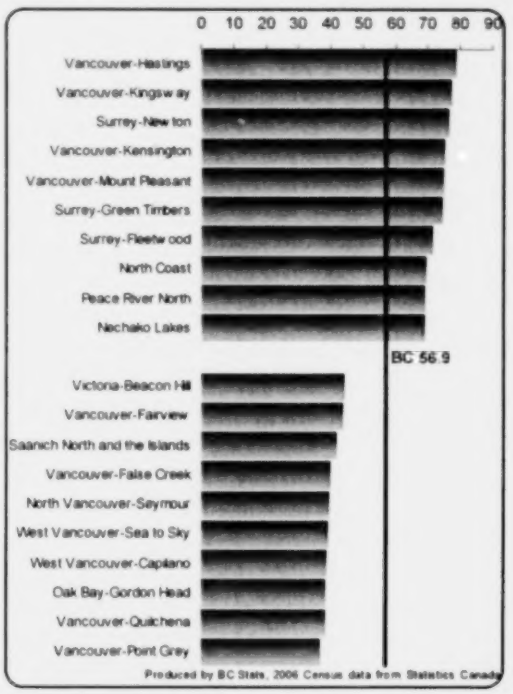


Getting beyond that first credential – take 3

Wow! Vancouver area ridings now claim the seven least educated placings when we move on to look at seniors. And other Vancouver area ridings hold the same number among the bottom ten slots. The extremes of outcome are found in amazing abundance in the lower mainland. We also see that the BC average has rebounded from 38.2% for the 25 to 64 year olds to 56.9% for the 65s and over.

While the Vancouver area continues to dominate the more educated end of the spectrum we now see three Victoria area ridings vying for this same space. Considering the population differential, Victoria is punching above its weight class on this one.

65+ with high school or less, % of population 65 & older



I'm qualified to do that!

Immigrants bring not only a rich diversity of ethnicities and languages with them, many bring skills and qualifications that were gained before their arrival. This can be a source of frustration when their qualifications are not recognized in their newly adopted country. Across the province more than a fifth of the adult working age population have as their highest qualification one that was earned outside of Canada. This figure can be more than doubled in the Vancouver area ridings that top our scale and this can be a sensitive issue.

The ridings at the other end of the scale are, without exception, hinterland in nature. On the face of it the issue of recognition of foreign credentials will not play so strongly here. However, as they face growing skill and service shortages as their more quickly ageing labour force takes retirement, they can quickly become passionate about the issue.

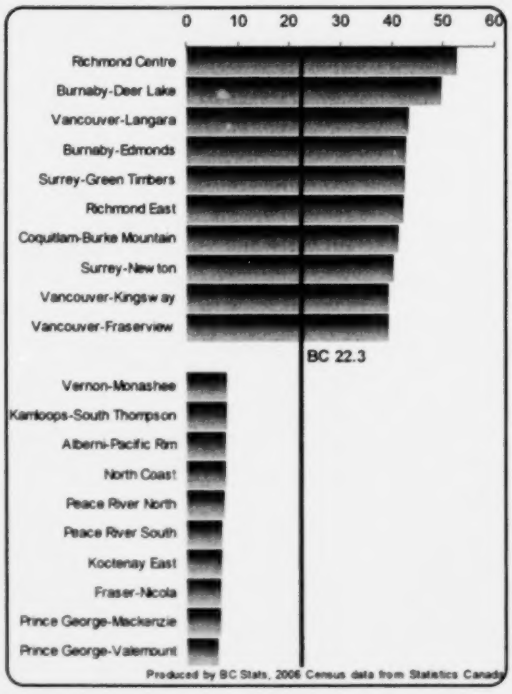
Money!

The median point in a ranked series of numbers is the point at which half the observations are above it and half fall below. This is an especially good measure of 'averageness' when dealing with things like income, where especially high earning individuals skew the distribution and noticeably raise the mean or arithmetic average. These outliers have no such effect on the median.

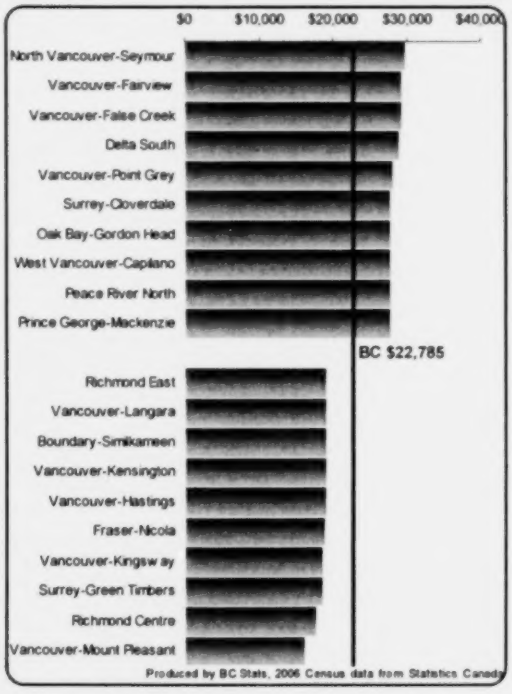
Vancouver area ridings again dominate the highs and lows on this measure as it encompasses the most affluent and the grittiest neighbourhoods as well as everything in between. You can even stand on the top rung of the ladder and see the bottom rung.

There does not appear to be a tremendous amount of variation on this measure but we will find differences as we parcel the population into a number of different groups.

Qualified outside Canada. % of pop 25-64 with post-sec



Median 2005 total after-tax income for pop 15+, $



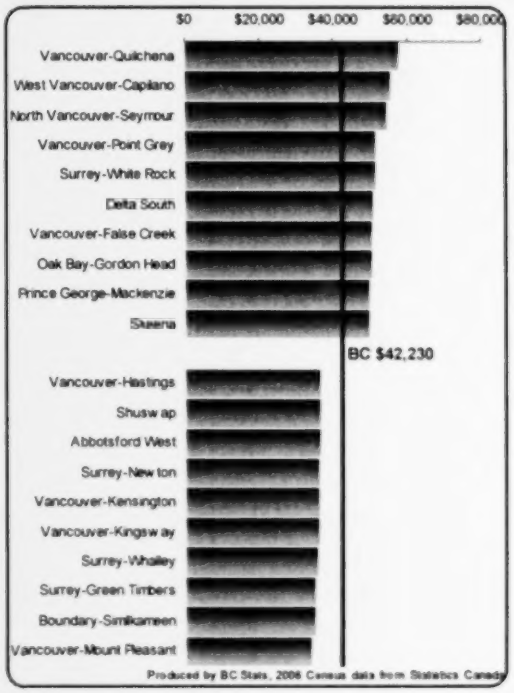
Worked for it

Here we are focusing on just the ones that clocked up full-time employment to earn their income.

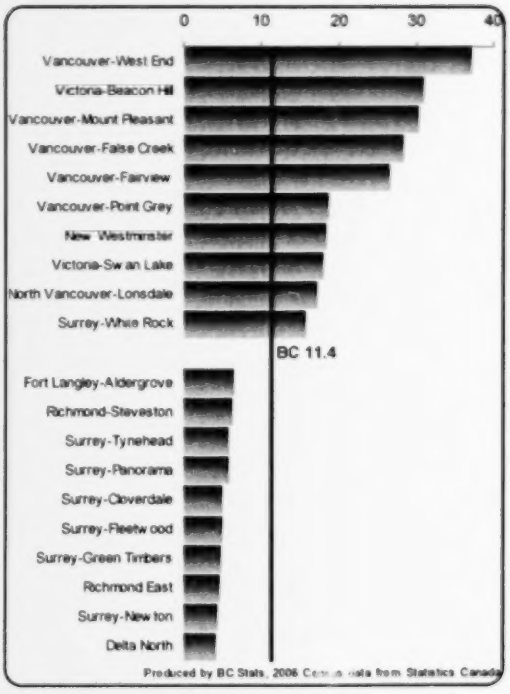
There is some shuffling of the ranks but the relative diversion from the provincial median tightens. The expected reward for work is income and we see that here with a much higher figure, albeit before tax.

We saw earlier that the tax system does some work towards easing the differences in income. Full-time work seems to accomplish much the same thing.

Median 2005 employment income (full yr, full time), $



Living alone as % of all persons in private households



Single occupancy

We are back to a measure that sees wide divergence across ridings – at least across highly urbanized ridings. It appears that cities are at once the most lonely and least lonely places that people can find themselves. Generally the difference between the list toppers and the other end of the spectrum is bridged by a bus ride from the highly urbanized core to the suburbs.

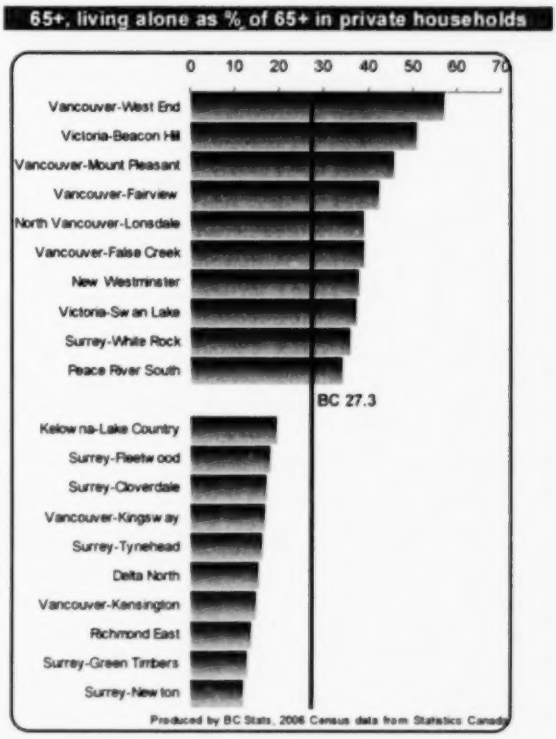
There are wide differences here and issues that motivate lone occupants will set them apart.

Eleanor Rigby

The percentage living alone jumps from 11.4 for the total population to 27.3 % for seniors.

We see many of the same ridings claiming a spot in the charted extremes. The surprise of this is not the presence of the seniors who have caused the rankings. To appreciate this you will have to examine the tables that are available on our site to see that, for the most part, the vast majority of the single occupants are not seniors. Likely the housing stock itself is geared to single occupancy or not. Seniors are more likely to live alone no matter where they are.

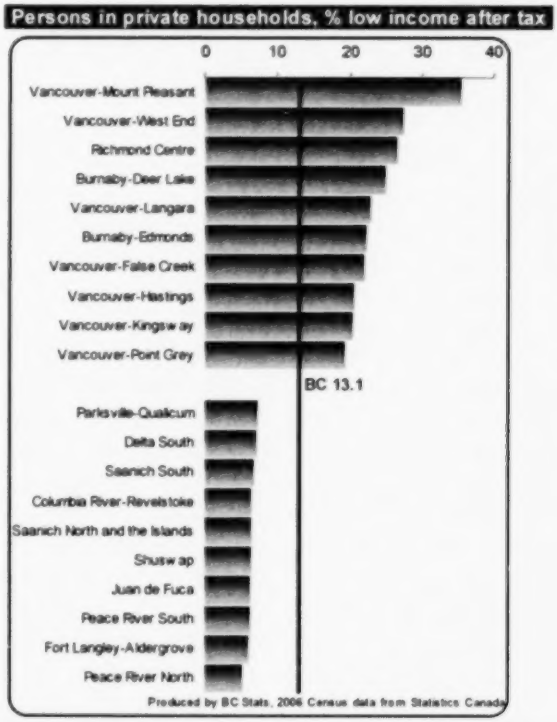
As a result, housing and support for seniors in their own homes may galvanize the seniors constituency like few other issues.



Squeezed

There is a pretty smooth and gradual ascent as we move up the line through the bottom (less low income) rankings, the imagined 65 ridings that fill the gap, and the top (more low income) ridings—until we get to Vancouver-Mount Pleasant, which includes the blighted downtown eastside. It is head and shoulders worse off than the one before it. Surprisingly, the one before is the more glitzy West End. In fact, every riding with the dubious distinction of being at the top of this list is in close proximity to Vancouver's downtown core.

Step to the bottom of the list and we find we are generally well away from the lower mainland. Part of this is that the bar is set lower for areas of fewer residents since we expect them to have lower housing costs.



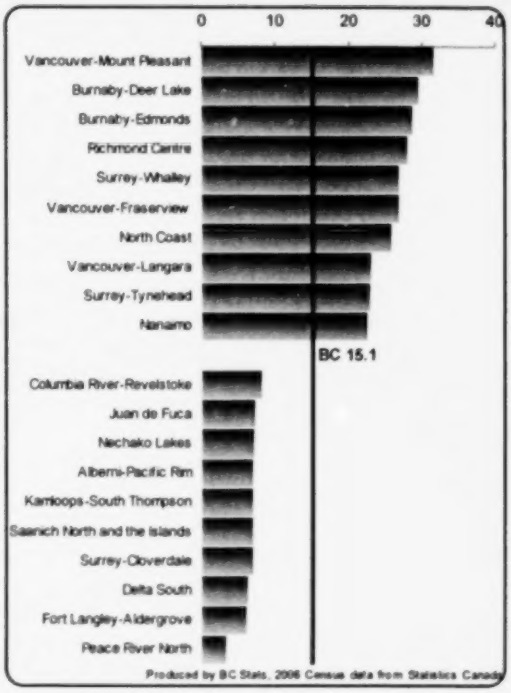
Suffer the children

On average, children have slightly elevated chances to be associated with low income: 15.1% compared to 13.1% for all persons in private households.

The top of the chart is no longer the preserve of core Vancouver ridings. The suburbs have snuck in as well as a couple of others for good measure.

Towards the bottom we see similar shuffling.

Children under 6 years, % low income after tax in 2005

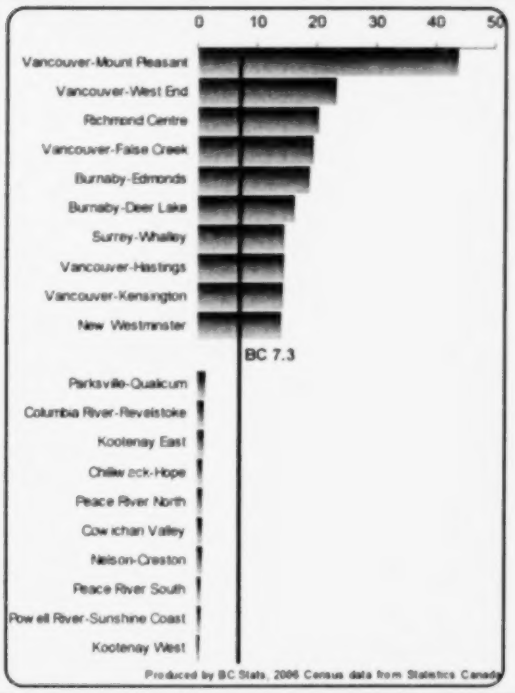


Golden years for some

The rankings on this list bear close resemblance to what we saw for the population as a whole. Nevertheless there are some extraordinary differences. Province-wide the incidence of low income for seniors is not much more that half what the overall population faces. And there has been a very notable increase in the range from top to bottom. Generally, seniors are more fortunate than young children with regard to living in 'straitened circumstances'. A good number are much more fortunate.

But the ones that are worse off at the top of the list are relatively more worse off, some much more so when compared to the average. Vancouver-Mount Pleasant doubles its closest rival – which is again Vancouver-West End. Policies that address affordability issues for seniors may be attentively followed in all our list toppers.

Persons 65 and over, % low income after tax in 2005



All in the family

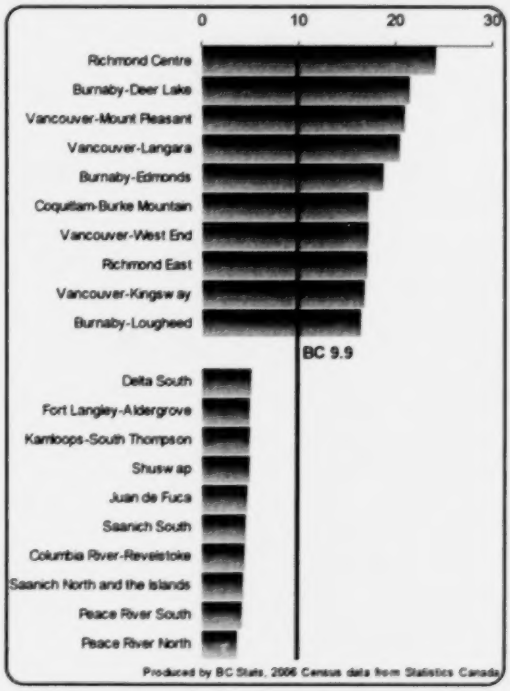
Previously we have looked at the distribution of low income with respect to all persons in private households and then seen how age affects the outcome. Now we take a look at how family circumstances (family type) change the picture.

Overall, families have less chance of experiencing low income compared to all individuals. Many families have the opportunity to bring home more than two incomes and thereby raise themselves out of low income.

Vancouver ridings monopolize the top of the list and again we see some shuffling, and the absence of a true outlier.

Rural ridings dominate the bottom of the chart by experiencing less low income.

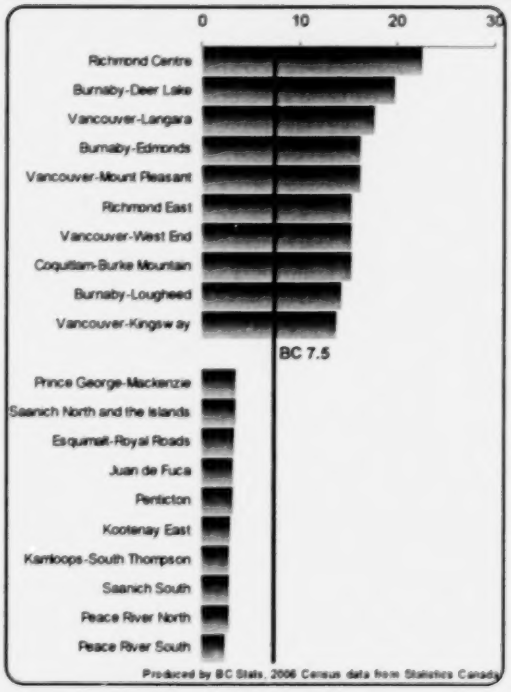
Economic families, % low income after tax in 2005



So happy together

By looking only at couple economic families, with or without children at home, we see province-wide improvement from 9.9% to 7.5% but the couple families in the ridings at the worse off end of our chart have much the same experience as for all families. The improvement seems to have been shifted to the less straitened ridings at the other end of the spectrum.

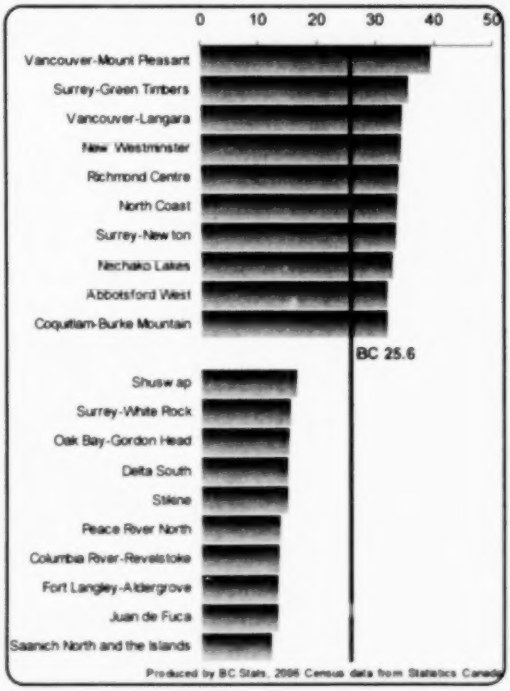
Couple economic families, % low income after tax, 2005



Single moms rock (and a hard place)

Families headed by single mothers are three times more likely than couple families to experience low income. And this is after the tax system has had the opportunity to even things out a little. We do see some compression about the provincial average, but the absolute level is high. And the pain is spread around a little more . . . Vancouver ridings have lost their lock on all top ten spots. The single moms seem to fare best in the capital, outlying Vancouver suburbs and at the far reaches of the province

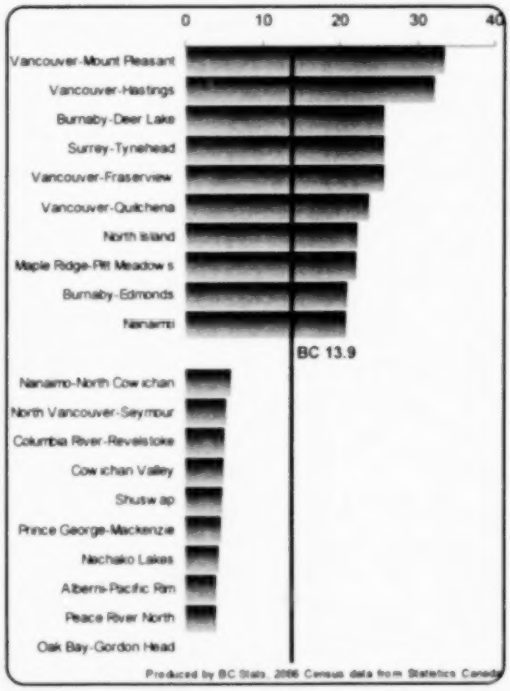
Female lone-parent ec. families, % low income after tax



Dad can manage

Lone-parent families headed by a male are only half as likely as those headed by a female to be in a low income situation—province-wide. But the chart clearly shows that there is much wider variation for the men. While on the whole they are better off, some are very much better off and at the other end of the scale we see ridings where they are no better off. The two Vancouver ridings that top our list are physical neighbours as well.

Male lone-parent econ. families, % low income after tax

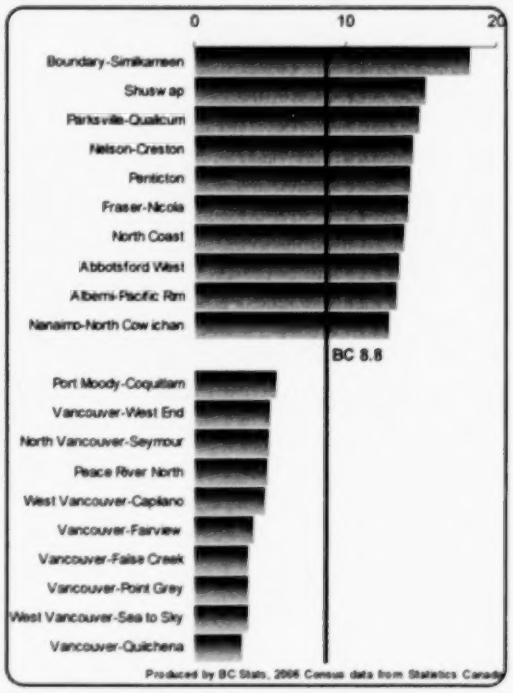


Not where you think

Many would assume that the low income list-topping Vancouver area ridings will be the ones to show up when we turn to government transfers. But they would be thoroughly wrong.

The Vancouver area does take ten spots: one at the top and nine from the other extreme. This is for couple economic families who, across the province, derive almost nine percent of their income from government transfers. There is a fair amount of variation top to bottom with the most reliant riding, Boundary-Similkameen, standing well above its next neighbour on the chart.

Couple econ. families, gov't transfers as % of income

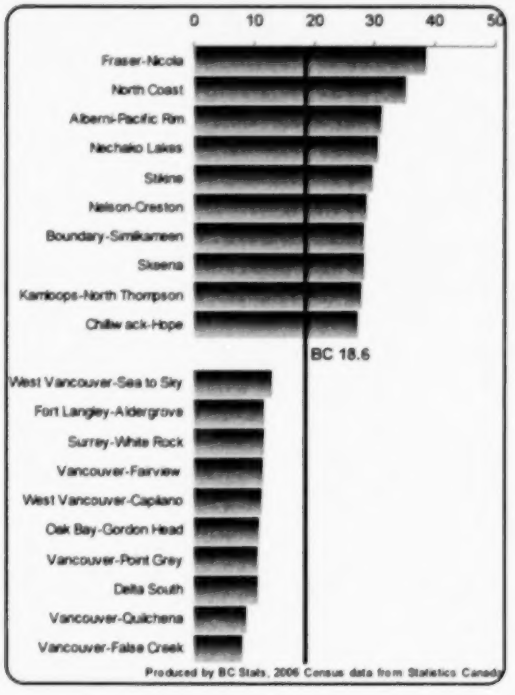


Life support

The ranking of ridings when we narrow our focus to how much of their income female headed lone-parent families derive from government transfers looks strikingly similar. The main difference is that the overall average has doubled, as have most of the observations.

Again we find that, even for single moms, the most self-reliant are to be found in the lower mainland.

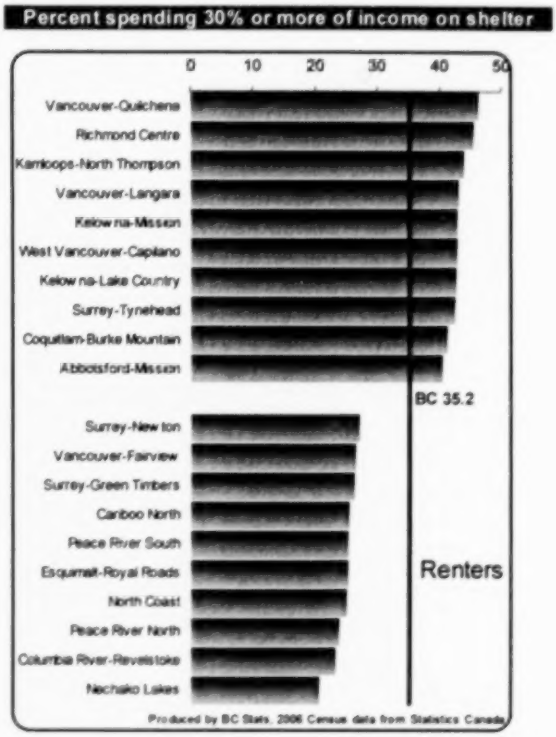
Female lone-parent ec. fam., % government transfers



Cheque up on renters

In British Columbia 35 percent of renters spend more than 30 percent of their income on shelter. The places where even more are writing onerous cheques include some Vancouver area ridings as well as a couple from Kelowna and Kamloops. High rent and/or lower household income can both conspire to put this monkey on your back. Our list toppers may be especially sensitive to issues that touch on affordability for renters in particular.

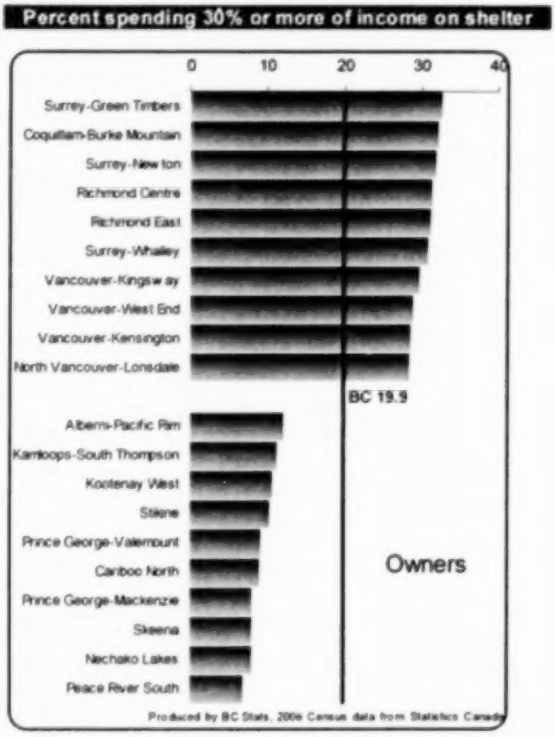
Easier circumstances for renters can be found in a mix of mostly more outlying Vancouver ridings and a mix of ridings from around the province.



Owners buy (and large)

Owners, by and large, are much better off as the average owner spends only twenty percent of household income on shelter. However, there is more variation here. Up to fifty percent more of our top ten pay out more than 30 percent of their incomes. These ridings will include many owners who are feeling the pinch. They may attentively listen to solutions that often even modest easing of their circumstances. That messaging may be most welcome in the lower mainland.

The most fortunate owners, on this measure, are found nowhere in or remotely close to the Vancouver area. And they are much better off than the average – more so than how the most fortunate renters compare to their average.

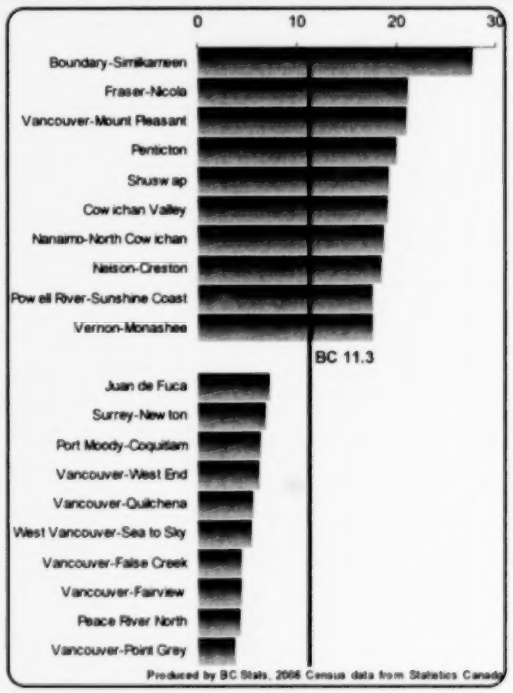


Single males on support

Males, aged 15 and over, not in economic families, draw 11 percent of their income from government transfers. There is a fair bit of variation about this average and one riding, Boundary-Similkameen, stands well above all the others. It's a big step down from there, but then a gradual procession to the other end of the spectrum. Only one Vancouver riding, Vancouver-Mount Pleasant, with its troubled downtown east side is found among the most reliant ridings.

The Vancouver area takes the lion's share at the other end but is joined by the energy driven Peace River North, standing side by side with Vancouver-Point Grey.

Males 15+ not in ec. fam., % government transfers

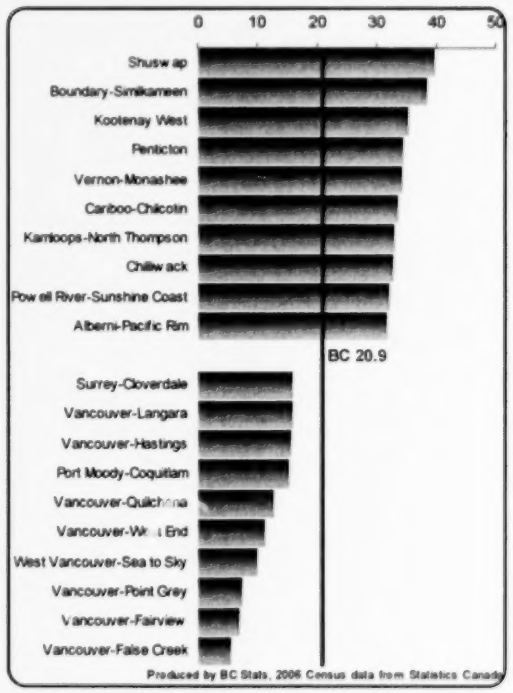


Help wanted

With the exception of the outlier, the situation is not much different for females, aged 15 and over, not in economic families – except that the levels have almost doubled. If we saw experiences that resembled generalized hardship for the men – and their children – in some ridings above, here we are seeing something that is a quantum step above that.

Interestingly, on this measure Peace River North has disappeared from the ranks of the most self reliant. A review of the labour force in that area should demonstrate an abundance of male dominated industries and occupations.

Females 15+ not in ec. fam., % government transfers



Nuclear option

Fully 65 percent of households are one-family households. There is some variation to the top side of this level but much more variation at the other end where only half this figure is found in Vancouver-West End.

Vancouver area ridings dominate both ends of this scale—in fact they own the top and share the bottom with two Victoria area ridings.

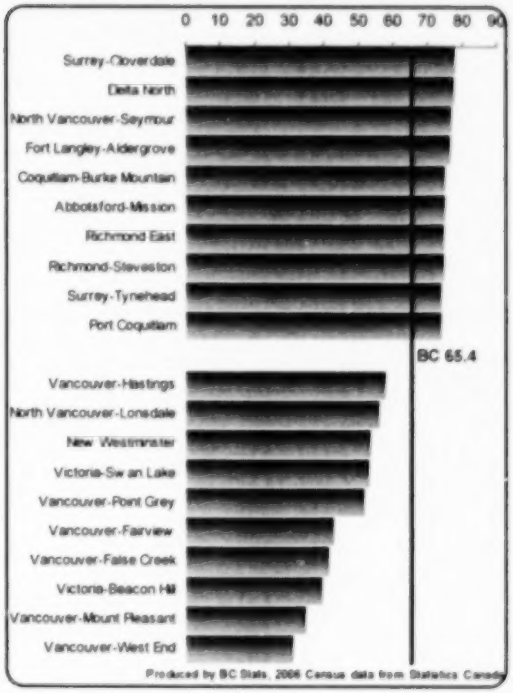
Two other family types are identified in the census profile: multiple-family households and non-family households. It is the non-family households that make up the bulk of what is not measured in the chart. Circumstances can vary, but generally we think of these as consisting of roommates who are sharing the rent or mortgage. Programs aimed at traditional families may have less widespread appeal in the ridings at the bottom of the list.

Dream home

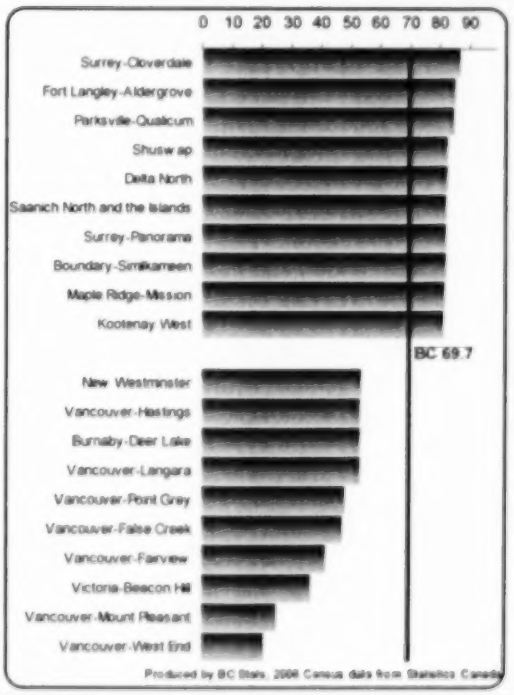
The flip side of owning is renting, so you can think of renters as extending from the ends of the visible bars to the right side of the chart area. In truth, there is a third option called band housing found only on Indian Reserves, but the numbers are not significant in all but a few ridings.

We see much the same shape of chart as above but the Vancouver area has given up all but four ridings at the highest level of ownership, while even more firmly grasping the ridings with the lowest levels of ownership. What's very different about the two charts is the top ten has three repeats while the bottom ten is virtually the same grouping with eight repeats. It seems that owners are not sharing their homes - indeed, they are less compelled to for as we saw earlier, relatively fewer owners are making shelter payments above 30 percent of their incomes. Programs aimed at owners may have less traction in the ridings at the bottom of our list. ■

One-family households as % of all households



Owner-occupied dwellings as percent of all dwellings



Infoline

March 20, 2009
Issue 09–11

Email transmission information service from BC Stats

also on the Internet at www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca or choose RSS

BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Oct 1/08	% change on one year ago
BC	4,405.5	1.6
Canada	33,441.3	1.2
GDP and INCOME (Revised Nov 6)		
(BC - at market prices)	2007	% change on one year ago
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) *($ millions)*	192,528	5.4
GDP *($ 2002 millions)*	164,583	3.0
GDP *($ 2002 per Capita) (reflects revised pop)*	38,184	1.4
Personal Disposable Income *($ 2002 per Capita)*	25,282	3.1
TRADE ($ millions, seasonally adjusted)		% change on prev. month
Manufacturing Shipments - Jan	2,841	-3.0
Merchandise Exports - Jan	2,338	-5.8
Retail Sales - Jan	4,387	3.1
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX	% change on one year ago	12-month avg % change
(all items - Feb 2009)		
BC	1.5	2.2
Vancouver	1.6	2.4
Victoria	1.5	2.0
Canada	1.4	2.2
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change on prev. month
(seasonally adjusted)	Feb '09	
Labour Force - BC	2,424	0.4
Employed - BC	2,263	-0.2
Unemployed - BC	162	9.6
		Jan '09
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	6.7	6.1
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	7.7	7.2
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Mar 18/09	Mar 19/08
Prime Business Rate	2.50	5.25
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	4.50	7.25
- 5 year	5.79	7.29
US-CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Mar 18/09	Mar 19/08
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $ per US $	1.2720	1.0028
(closing rate) US $ per Cdn $	0.8024	0.9849
AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE RATE		% change on one year ago
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Feb '09	
BC	798.07	4.1
Canada	797.78	3.6

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Wage Rate } Statistics Canada

Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www.bankofcanada.ca

Local Area Economic Dependencies

Based on Census and other economic data, this report was prepared to provide consistent information on the local economies in the rural areas of the province of British Columbia and to help in the estimation of the economic impacts of changes in those local economies.

www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/pubs/econ_dep.asp

Dynamic Population Pyramid

One of the best tools for examining population age/sex structure and dynamics is the Population Pyramid. With this graph, one can view a region's age and sex structure with a glance, but with our dynamic pyramid tool the user can see the changing community population profile over time.

www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/pop/PeopleDataViewer/pyramid.asp

Interactive Health Map Browser

Mapping of data in themes is recognized as one of the most effective tools for looking at differences across regions and even over time. BC Stats' interactive Data and Health Browsers provide the user with a wealth of information collected from a variety of sources. The 'Data Browser' presents a wide range of data topics and variables from the 2001 and 2006 Censuses for Local Health Areas, while the Health Browser presents a wide variety of health indicators from the Ministry of Health on a Health Service Delivery Area geography.

www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/pop/maps/browsers.asp

Released this week by BC Stats

- Exports, January 2009
- Consumer Price Index, February 2009
- Quarterly Regional Statistics, 4th Quarter 2008

Next week

- Business Indicators, March 2009
- Current Statistics, March 2009

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